



By Cpl. Bill Putnam, 122nd MPAD

A 600-pound demolition charge explodes and destroys a bridge over a canal in the farmlands in southern Baghdad Nov. 27. The demolition effort was carried out by Soldiers from the 8th and 458th engineer battalions, hoping to deny insurgents easy access to the city's center to carry out attacks.

## MNF-Iraq Announces U.S. Force Increases

BAGHDAD, Iraq-- A request by the Gen. George Casey, the senior military commander in Iraq, to temporarily increase the U.S. military force posture in Iraq has been approved by the Department of Defense and will affect the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

This decision was made in coordination with the Interim Iraqi Government.

This action is taken to maintain the momentum gained during Operation Al Fajr, to keep the insurgents off balance and to set the conditions for successful elections Jan. 30. Force posture changes will take advantage of a "window of opportunity" following successful operations in Fallujah. This temporary measure complements continuing increases in Iraqi Security Force strength.

"It is important that we understand this temporary measure will give the MNF-I commander experienced units for post-Fallujah operations, and will provide additional security for the January elections," Lt. Col. James Hutton, the 1st Cavalry Division public affairs officer said.

In addition to the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas; the United States Army's 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; and the United States Marine Corps' 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Okinawa, Japan, will be extended beyond their current rotation dates. This extension also includes the 66th Transportation Company, Kleber Kasern, Germany. The length of extension varies between the units. Two battalions from the 82nd Airborne Division will deploy to Iraq for an anticipated duration of approximately 120 days to support security efforts during the election period.

## Red Team Forces Deny Insurgents

By Cpl. Bill Putnam  
122nd MPAD

AL RASHID DISTRICT, Baghdad -- Nearly every night since the toppling of the Hussein regime last year, insurgents have been using several roads in southern Baghdad's farming lands to launch attacks.

"They use the roads to conduct their rocket missions against the International Zone," said 1st Lt. William Woods, a platoon leader in Company B, 8th Engineer Battalion, referring to the palace complex of the Hussein regime and now site of the interim Iraqi government and U.S. Embassy in downtown Baghdad.

To deny those roads and essentially channel the insurgents into "kill zones," several of the roads and bridges the insurgents frequently used were blown by combat engineers from Company B, 8th Engineers, and Company B, 458th Engineer Battalion over several days in late November. They called it "Operation Thunderstruck." The operation got underway Nov. 27.

Blowing up the roads and bridges criss-crossing irrigation canals, farm fields and date palm groves in the rural areas south of Baghdad will delay or potentially stop insurgent attacks, Woods said.

The engineers went to six sites,

destroying the roads and bridges using tools engineers love to use on the battlefield: cratering charges, mine-clearing line charges (MCLCs) and plastic explosives. In all, the engineers used nearly 15 tons of explosives over the course of the operation.

For the 8th Engineers' Bravo Company Soldiers, Thunderstruck was the first time they've been able to do their primary jobs since arriving in Baghdad in April.

Woods said his engineers were ready to finally get "their hands on some demolitions" and put their "expertise" to use.

"We're very excited," Woods said.

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# "Thunderstruck" Destroys Insurgent Route

## Continued from Page 1

"Essentially what the blown roads would do is deny the enemy an easy way in and out of the area," said Staff Sgt. Kirt Allen, an engineer squad leader in Bravo, 8th Engineers. "Anyway we can immobilize them, helps us out. So, if we slow them down, that helps us out."

In other words, Allen explained, "...turn them into a kill zone."

Allen, a nine-year veteran of the combat engineers and multiple deployments and numerous exercises, said he's lost track of the number of times he's blown demolition.

This, though, is his first time "blowing stuff up" in a real world situation, he said.

But he said he wasn't too excited about it. He's done it so much he doesn't get excited until the explosion.

After his platoon set two charges, 200 and 600 pounds each, the adrenaline level rose for Allen as he blew up two bridges crossing canals.

"That was good stuff, man," he said after the second blast.

Allen and Woods' group did see one close call the first day, though. A car tried driving over the bridge after the timer



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Soldiers from Company B, 8th Engineers cover demolition charges at a south Baghdad site Nov. 27 during Operation Thunderstruck.

fuse had been set. The vehicle stopped at one point, but the small maroon car began slowly rolling up to the bridge despite the engineers' arm waving and yelling.

With just under 30 seconds until the explosion, an engineer fired warning shots with an M-2 .50 caliber machine gun. The driver got the point and turned around.

"That would've been bad news if he hadn't stopped in time," Woods said.

A few seconds later, 600 pounds of explosives destroyed the bridge with a resounding boom and tower of flying dirt.

"Yeah!" several engineers said almost at once.

"That's how you blow stuff up," one of them said.

## PROTECT YOURSELF IN A ROCKET ATTACK



► AT THE FIRST SIGN OF ATTACK ASSUME THE PRONE POSITION AND REMAIN IN THAT POSITION UNTIL THE "ALL CLEAR" IS ANNOUNCED!

► IF POSSIBLE, DON YOUR IBA AND KEVLAR.

► IF IN A TENT, DROP TO THE FLOOR, DON YOUR IBA AND KEVLAR, ROLL TOWARD THE SANDBAG PROTECTED WALL AND ASSUME THE PRONE POSITION. REMAIN UNTIL "ALL CLEAR"

► IF IN A CONCRETE BUILDING, DON YOUR IBA AND KEVLAR, SIT ON THE FLOOR WITH YOUR BACK TO AN INSIDE WALL, STAY AWAY FROM WINDOWS AND GLASS. REMAIN UNTIL "ALL CLEAR"

► IF AWAY FROM YOUR QUARTERS OR WORK PLACE, GO TO THE CLOSEST BUNKER IF POSSIBLE, OR LIE PRONE, IN A DEPRESSION, IN THE GROUND. REMAIN UNTIL "ALL CLEAR" IS ANNOUNCED.

► NEVER GO OUTSIDE UNTIL THE "ALL CLEAR" IS ANNOUNCED!

## Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

**I can't eat this.**

**laa astaTeeAH an aakul haaza**

**Friday**  
High: 57  
Low: 34



**Saturday**  
High: 61  
Low: 36



**Sunday**  
High: 59  
Low: 37



Weather information provided by 1CD Staff Weather Office (SWO)

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## News Notes

### More Putting Off Marriage Vows

WASHINGTON (AP)-- It used to be common for men and women to get a marriage certificate not too long after collecting their high school diploma. Not anymore. Census Bureau figures for 2003 show one-third of men and nearly one-quarter of women between the ages of 30 and 34 have never been married, nearly four times the rates in 1970. Data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey released this week show the age at which someone typically marries for the first time rose from 20.8 for women and 23.2 for men in 1970 to 25.3 and 27.1, respectively, last year.

### Too Tight Jeans or Assault?

BELLE VERNON, Pa. (AP)-- A man accused of pointing a loaded handgun at a police officer says he's only guilty of wearing tight jeans. Sean Eldon Duvall, 36, was arrested Tuesday on charges including aggravated assault and reckless endangerment. Court papers said Duvall left his car with the .38-caliber revolver hidden under papers and aimed it at a n officer. Duvall acknowledged he had his gun with him, but said he has a permit to carry it. By law, the gun must be concealed, but Duvall said he couldn't conceal it under his pants because his jeans were too tight.



*The Kansas City Star*

June and Len Horwitz of Kansas City, Mo., stroll through heavy snowflakes in the city's Country Club Plaza Tuesday. Winter storms swept through the area this week.

## Radio Fans Walk to Raise Funds, Spirits

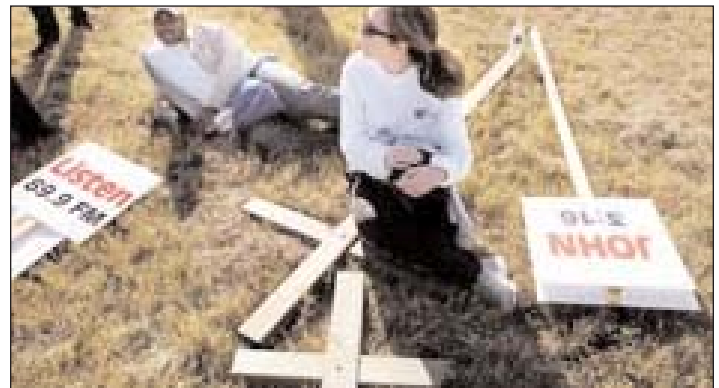
BELTON, Texas (*Killeen Daily Herald*)-- Truckers honked and drivers waved as they passed the seven pilgrims marching along Interstate 35 Wednesday.

The walkers, carrying signs and dragging large wooden crosses on their backs, made for an odd and solemn scene along the busy highway's northbound access road. But the small group's message is one of hope, love ... and fundraising.

The Crosswalk is one of the bi-annual fund-raising stunts for KBDE 89.9 FM, a Christian radio station that broadcasts from Waco. Seven individuals, representing a Killeen team, a Waco team and a Temple/Belton team, are walking along I-35 from Salado to Waco.

They began their 50-mile trek around 12:30 p.m. Wednesday and plan to reach Waco on Friday. As they walk, listeners call the radio station and make pledges of money in support of one of the teams. Step by step and pledge by pledge, the station inches toward its \$250,000 goal.

"The theme this year is 'To the Glory of God' and



*Killeen Daily Herald*

Braber Smith and Sarah Hibbs, both of Temple, take a break Wednesday afternoon after walking 2.8 miles from Salado on their way to Waco to raise funds for KBDE 89.9 FM.

we're

doing the Crosswalk to emphasize that," said walk coordinator Ben Ray.

KBDE disc jockey Michael Conn said listeners always come through for the non-profit, non-commercial station and he believes the fund-raising goal will be met early. But the pledges aren't the only reason for the Crosswalk, he said.

"The number one thing is, we want to share the love of Christ and that he's the reason for the upcoming Christmas holiday," Conn said.

He said the crosses also serve to bring passers-by a little hope and raise spirits.

The crosses, which are larger than the three men carrying them, were already becoming a burden by the second mile. Draper Smith, a listener and KBDE worker walking for the Killeen team, was grateful when Ray handed him some cushioning for the heavy load on his shoulder. The labor didn't seem to dampen Smith's spirits, though.

"I'm always looking for more ways to be intimate with the Lord," he said.

## No. 5 Illinois Downs No. 1 Demons

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. (AP)-- With about 2½ minutes still left in the game, Illinois' rabid "Orange Krush" student section started chanting "WE'RE No. 1! WE'RE No. 1!"

No. 5 Illinois certainly made a case for the top ranking Wednesday night, turning No. 1 Wake Forest into a non-conference patsy with a 91-73 rout that wasn't nearly as close as the score indicated.

"They played infinitely better than we did. I don't know how much more clearly I can say it," Wake Forest coach Skip Prosser said. "They made shots that were open, they made shots that were contested. Their offense was exponentially better than our defense, hence the score of the game."

The Illini were so dominant in stretches they looked like the Globetrotters. They held the Demon Deacons to 39 percent shooting, and their two best players were never a factor. Chris Paul, the leading vote-getter on the AP's presea-



Illinois' student cheering section, the Orange Krush, celebrates No. 5 Illinois' 91-73 victory over No. 1 Wake Forest at Assembly Hall in Champaign, Ill.

son All-America team, had 10 while Justin Gray, MVP of the preseason NIT, had 11.

"I don't know what to say," Brown said when asked if the Illini should be No. 1. "After that performance, you tell me."

The Illini are now 2-19 in games against No. 1 teams - but they won both played at

Assembly Hall. They beat then-No. 1 Michigan State 57-55 in 1979 - if it's any consolation to the Demon Deacons, the Spartans still won the national championship that year.

Illinois has now won 35 straight at home against non-conference opponents, a streak dating back to Nov. 17, 1998.

## Suns Trounce Cavaliers in Phoenix

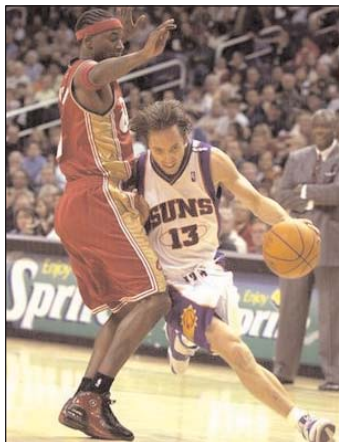
PHOENIX (AP)-- Amare Stoudemire, Steve Nash and Quentin Richardson each scored 21 points, and the Phoenix Suns - off to their best start in 24 years - won their ninth in a row with a 120-101 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers on Wednesday night.

Joe Johnson scored 18 points and held LeBron James to 6-for-19 shooting for 15 points - 11 under his average.

Stoudemire scored 13 on 6-for-6 shooting in the decisive third quarter and Nash sat out the fourth while his backup Leandro Barbosa scored 13 of his 15 points.

Shawn Marion had 10 points and 12 rebounds as all five Phoenix starters scored in double figures for the second night in a row.

The victory streak matched the sixth-longest in Suns' history and avenged one



Phoenix Suns' Steve Nash, right, of Canada, drives past Cleveland Cavaliers' Jeff McInnis.

of Phoenix's two losses this season. The Suns' NBA-best record of 13-2 is their best start since they went 14-2 in 1980-81.

The game featured the

players of the month for November, Nash in the Western Conference and James in the Eastern.

Jeff McInnis scored 26 and Zydrunas Ilgauskas 22 for Cleveland, 0-2 on a three-game trip to the West.

The Suns led just 48-46 but outscored the Cavs 72-55 in the second half.

When Phoenix played in Cleveland Nov. 10, the Suns blew an 18-point lead with 6½ minutes in regulation and lost in overtime, 114-109. There was no such collapse in the rematch.

In addition to the players of the month, the game also featured the last two Western Conference players of the week (Marion and Stoudemire). ... Ilgauskas scored 13 points in the first quarter, but none in the second. ... The smaller Suns out-rebounded Cleveland 48-37.

## In Brief

### Hilton Stapler Leads Auction, 1K

NEW YORK (AP)-- \$1000 for a stapler? No, it's not holiday shopping madness, but an online auction for a



Paris Hilton autographed stapler. Office retailer Staples is holding a "Staplers of the Stars" online charity auction of celebrity signed staplers. With more than 140 celebs in the mix, Hilton's stapler is currently leading the pack at \$1,005. Hilton is followed by Donald Trump and Katie Couric, whose autographed staplers are each going for \$800. Other staplers being bid on are signed by Ringo Starr, Kobe Bryant, Bill Gates, Rudy Guiliani and Cher.

### Yankees Give Up on Johnson Trade

NEW YORK (AP)-- The New York Yankees pulled out of trade talks for Randy Johnson on Wednesday, telling the Diamondbacks that their proposals for deals involving the five-time Cy Young Award winner were unreasonable, The Associated Press learned. The Yankees informed Arizona of their decision Wednesday afternoon, ending weeks of discussions, a high-ranking baseball official told the AP. While talks appear dead, they might not be over for good. For now, the Yankees find Arizona's current asking price too high.